

Testimony of First Selectman Michael Pace

Town of Old Saybrook

**Re: SB 3 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACQUISITION OR USE OF CERTAIN
PARCELS OF LAND AS ASH RESIDUE DISPOSAL AREAS**

Before the Environment Committee

February 13 2009

Good morning, Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, Senator McKinney, Representative Chapin, and all the other members of the Environment Committee. My name is Michael Pace and I am the First Selectman of Old Saybrook. I am also the Chair of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority Board of Directors appointed by the Governor. I am here today to testify in opposition to Senate Bill No. 3, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE ACQUISITION OR USE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND AS ASH RESIDUE DISPOSAL AREAS.

I was selected to serve as the Chair of the CRRA Board of Directors since the General Assembly re-created the CRRA Board and Management back in 2002 to restructure the Authority and get it back on track after the Enron bankruptcy. I am proud to say that along with all of my other fellow Board members who have been asked to serve after 2002, we have been successful in recovering most of the monies lost in the Enron transaction and have returned the Authority to its core mission of serving in the best interest of its member towns and the state of Connecticut.

As part of its core mission as defined in statute, CRRA is responsible for developing an ash landfill such as we have proposed in the town of Franklin. SB 3 would severely hamper the Authority's efforts at fulfilling its statutory mission of implementing the state's new Solid Waste Management Plan. As you may know, CRRA in accordance with DEP and in agreement with the City of Hartford, has closed the landfill in Hartford as of December 31, 2008 and must find another location for this inert ash residue material. CRRA is currently shipping some of its ash residue to out-of-state landfills and to the only other ash landfill in Connecticut located in Putnam which is privately owned.

As Chairman of our Board and also a chief elected official of one of the Mid-Connecticut Project towns, one of my main goals is to ensure that CRRA's trash-to-energy projects provide the lowest possible trash disposal fees to its member towns and residents while at the same time ensuring the public health and strict environmental standards are met at all of our facilities. In order to achieve those goals, the development of a CRRA publicly owned ash landfill is critical to ensure trash disposal tip fees remain stable and attractive.

CRRA was established over thirty years ago to be the implementer of the state's Solid Waste Management Plan and to modernize Connecticut's solid waste management system into what it is today. We continue to review and implement new solid waste and recycling technologies where appropriate and economically feasible. Our new state-of-the-art single stream recycling facility in Hartford became operational last fall and has been very successful to date. The facility allows CRRA member towns to deliver their

curbside recyclables in either the single-stream or dual-stream fashion. This is just one example of how CRRA is looking to the future on behalf of the state and its towns and in their best interests.

CRRA is currently performing on-site testing of the Franklin location to verify the suitability of the site. If the area meets all of DEP's strict landfill siting criteria, CRRA would then proceed with a permit application to DEP. If this legislation were to pass the General Assembly and prevent CRRA from the Franklin site, the Authority would have immense difficulty pursuing the next best site for obvious reasons.

As a first selectman, I can appreciate the concerns of the town and its residents about such a landfill proposal. However, as we have stated repeatedly when we started this landfill search process several years ago, that CRRA is committed to the highest environmental and public health standards and must adhere to all applicable laws and regulations.

I want thank the members of the Committee for the chance to speak and would be happy to try to answer any questions you have.